

The CIA Wanted Oswald Exhumed

Washington

Newly released files show that the Central Intelligence Agency, suspicious the Soviet Union may have brainwashed Lee Harvey Oswald, sought unsuccessfully to exhume his corpse to see if his reported 1959 suicide attempt was a Russian coverup.

The CIA considered Oswald's alleged suicide attempt four years before he killed John F. Kennedy "one of the crucial points in Oswald's experiences in the Soviet Union," according to an internal Warren commission memo made public yesterday under the Freedom of Information Act.

The CIA wanted to dig up Oswald's corpse and examine a scar on his left wrist, where he supposedly "deeply slashed" himself on Oct. 21, 1959 upon learning he had been denied Soviet citizenship.

The CIA felt "if the suicide incident is a fabrication, the time supposedly spent by Oswald in recovering ... in a Moscow hospital could have been spent by him in Russian secret police custody being coached, brainwashed, etc., for his appearance at the American embassy" three days later to renounce his U.S. citizenship, the memo said.

The body never was dug up, and the commission made no final judgment on whether Oswald's suicide attempt was authentic.

Followers of conspiracy theories contend that one strong possibility is Oswald was a Soviet agent when he shot Kennedy.

A copy of the memo from one commission assistant counsel, W. David Slawson, to another, Arlen Specter, was made available to United Press by Michael Levy, a freelance researcher who obtained thousands of assassination documents through a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

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